Remarks/Arguments:

Claims 1-17 are presently pending in this application, with claims 1-9 having been withdrawn from consideration. The Examiner is thanked for the courtesy of the telephone interview conducted on 19 December 2005. Prior to discussing the substance of the interview, the Examiner informed the undersigned that her supervisor suggested additional technology areas that were to be searched after the interview. In light of this information, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider re-opening the application and making the next Office Action non-Final, unless such additional searching reveals no closer references, in which case the Applicant requests a Notice of Allowance.

Claims 10-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,872,998 to Dausman ("Dausman") in view of Statutory Invention Registration H 0,000,980 to Harrison ("Harrison") and U.S. Patent No. 5,078,965 to Pearson ("Pearson"). In the Office Action, the Examiner stated that Dausman discloses an apparatus for forming pelletized fertilizer from sludge material, comprising a raw material ventilation system including a scrubber for treating air by removing dust and odor produced from the materials connected to the ventilation system and a pelleting system for producing pelletized material. The Examiner stated that the apparatus further comprises a fully automated control means for starting up and shutting down different components. The Examiner concluded that it is inherent that the apparatus is capable of starting the ventilation process by the ventilation system in the dryer for removing some of the dust and odor prior to starting the heat drying process by running heating fluid through a hollow hub located within the dryer. The Examiner stated that Dausman further discloses an odor control system connected to the scrubber and the fan, but fails to disclose a filter. The Examiner further stated that Harrison discloses an apparatus for forming granules fertilizer, comprising a raw material ventilation system, which includes an induced-blower and gas scrubber for exhausting feedstock at a feeding station prior to drying the feedstock at the dryer. The Examiner concluded that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify Dausman by providing an additional ventilation system at the feeding station prior to the dryer as taught by Harrison, in order to release gases or fumes from the granulator before more gases are produced during the drying process. Applicant respectfully traverses this analysis and conclusion.

Claim 10 recites, *inter alia*, a poultry litter fertilizer manufacturing system comprising a raw material ventilation system, a dryer system, and a pelleting system. The ventilation

system comprises a filter and a scrubber for treating air by removing dust and odor produced from raw material from the air prior to drying the raw material. The dryer system is connected to the ventilation system to receive the ventilated raw material for pasteurizing the raw material comprising poultry litter, drying the pasteurized material to form a dry material, and reducing the dried material to a powder. The dryer system is structurally ordered in the manufacturing system so as to receive the raw material after the raw material is treated by the raw material ventilation system. The pelleting system produces granular and homogenized pellets from the powder.

The presently claimed invention is structurally ordered with the ventilation system structurally ahead of the drying system and the pelleting system to take out the dust and odor as soon as the litter is deposited into the manufacturing plant and before any other processes are performed on the litter. Harrison, on the other hand, discloses an apparatus in which raw material enters granulator dryer rotary drum 1 via chute 19. Chute 19 is a solid tube, so no ventilation may take place until raw material exits chute 19. The discharge end of chute 19 is in granulation section 10 of drum 1. Granulation section 10 uses residual heat to accelerate water removal from the granules (col. 7, lines 47-55). Therefore, granulation section 10 is part of a dryer system. A hood 18 is located at the extreme downstream end of air flow in the drum 1. The hood 18 ventilates gases from the drum 1 as the gases move from left to right in the Figure. The raw material enters the dryer system (granulation section 10) prior to being treated by the ventilation system (hood 18).

Further, in the Description of Preferred Embodiments (Col. 7, line 56 - col. 8, line 52), Harrison discloses that air moves through the granulator to remove water vapor. Therefore, raw material is being dried in the granulator. Removal of water vapor lowers vapor pressure around the raw material, allowing water in the raw material to be drawn off, drying the raw material. Further, col. 8, line 10 recites "Final removal of moisture" is done by removing the product from the granulator and into the drum. Emphasis added. This statement presupposes an initial removal of moisture, which must be done in the granulation section. Harrison's ventilation system cannot act on raw material until AFTER the raw material is in the granulation section, at which point the drying process begins, as is explained above. Therefore, Harrison's drying system cannot be structurally located to receive the raw material after the raw material is treated by the raw material ventilation system, as is recited in claim 10.

Neither Dausman, nor the combination of Dausman and Harrison, as suggested by the Examiner, provides the structure as claimed in claim 10. Thus, even if Dausman were to be

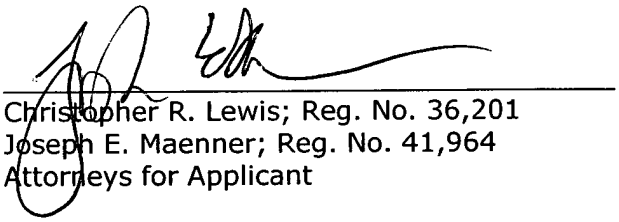
combined with Harrison, the provision of the dryer system being structurally ordered in the manufacturing system so as to receive the raw material after the raw material is treated by the raw material ventilation system is not disclosed or suggested by the references.

For all of the above reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that the rejection of claim 10 is improper and requests reconsideration and allowance. Claims 11-17 all depend, either directly or indirectly, from claim 10, and Applicant respectfully submits that claims 11-17 are patentable over the cited prior art for at least the same reasons as set forth above with respect to claim 10.

Conclusion

Based on the arguments above, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 10-17 are patentable over the cited prior art. Reconsideration and allowance of claims 10-17 is respectfully requested. In the alternative, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner re-open the application and make the next Office Action non-Final.

Respectfully submitted,



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